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## THE CREDIBILITY OF MARAT

ALL biographies of Marat which have any value, and notably those of Bougeart and Chevremont, suffer from one serious defect. They are written for the most part from material furnished by Marat, and this material is accepted without any attempt to criticize it. Both Bougeart and Chevremont have accepted Marat's assertions without hesitation, even on points where contradictory evidence is accessible. No biography written in this fashion can be sound. All other biographers of Marat do one of two things; either they follow the old traditions, or else they accept Bougeart and Chevremont, in either case quite uncritically.

A critical examination of Marat's statements, especially of those he made about himself, is difficult, because there is usually no way of testing them. This is true for the material relating to the period before the Revolution, because at that time Marat was not prominent enough to lead his contemporaries to examine his statements critically; and it is true of the material relating to the later period, because all who wrote on Marat then were either his blind admirers or his passionate enemies. In either case, their evidence is by itself utterly worthless.

In these conditions it is desirable to determine Marat's credibility wherever it is possible to do so. If we find him veracious and accurate in cases where we can control his statements, it will be allowable to trust him where control is impossible. On the other hand, if in these circumstances we find him lacking in accuracy or in veracity, we shall be bound henceforth to reject his unsupported assertions. If that is the case, Marat's life still remains to be written.

An opportunity to test Marat's accuracy and veracity in matters in which he was directly concerned is afforded by his account of a minor episode in his life. Marat published in 1774, at London, an anonymous political pamphlet called *The Chains of Slavery*.<sup>1</sup> This

<sup>1</sup> *The Chains of Slavery, a work wherein the clandestine and villainous attempts of Princes to ruin Liberty are pointed out, and the dreadful scenes of Despotism disclosed. To which is prefixed, an Address to the Electors of Great Britain, in order to draw their timely attention to the Choice of proper Representatives in the next Parliament. Vitam impendere vero.* (London, 1774, royal quarto, pp. xvi, 259.)

Marat's claim to be the author of this pamphlet has been frequently ques-

pamphlet he afterwards republished in a French version at Paris, in 1793.<sup>2</sup> In doing this he prefixed to the French version the his-

tioned since the Revolution, notably by Michelet. Now, it is as certain as anything of the sort can be that the book is Marat's, for he reissued it in 1775 at Newcastle with his name on the title-page. (See *Monthly Chronicle of North Country Lore and Legend* for April, 1887, p. 51, quoting notices in the *Newcastle Chronicle* for October 21, 28, and November 4, 1775.) No one of his contemporaries ever contested his claim. Moreover, the book was certainly written by some one whose customary speech was French. Witness the following sentences: "The eagerness of being respected, Princes have extended to their civil officers; less attentive to display in the persons of magistrates, the ministers of the laws, than men constituted in dignities" (*Chains*, p. 13). This cryptic saying is clear enough in the French version (*Les Chaines de l'Esclavage*, p. 59). "Men arrayed with honours and constituted in power" (*Chains*, p. 64), where we have the same use of the word "constitute". "Mercenary scribblers" who "are engaged for attempting to vindicate the proceedings of administration, for aspersing popular men" (*Chains*, p. 87), where the meaning conveyed at first sight is opposed to the meaning intended. He asserts that the prince "attempts to recall affairs into dispute" (*Chains*, p. 91), where "recall into dispute" is plainly a translation of *révoquer*. "Instead of concurring to the public welfare" (*Chains*, p. 22) is certainly not forcible or clear English, but it translates word for word into excellent French ("au lieu de concourir au bien public") (*Les Chaines*, p. —). He uses "research" for to search out (*Chains*, p. 54); "regal" for royal (*Chains*, p. 92); four times over "might" for may (*Chains*, pp. 14, 34, 149); twice "salary" in the sense of wages (*Chains*, pp. 31, 36); "unshaven" where he means bearded (*Chains*, p. 14); "abjection" for abjectness (*Chains*, p. 259); and "attractives" for attractions (*Chains*, p. 18). These are but a few of many instances, but they will suffice to show that the book was the work of a man who habitually spoke French. Again, Marat was in England in 1774, and he wrote several other pamphlets and books in English both before and after that date (*An Essay on the Human Soul*, London, 1772; *A Philosophical Essay on Man, being an attempt to investigate the Principles and Laws of the reciprocal influence of the Soul and Body*, London, 1773, 2 vols.; *An Essay on Gleets*, London, 1775; and *An Enquiry into the Nature, Cause, and Cure of a Singular Disease of the Eyes*, London, 1776). The English of these books shows similar deviations from correct usage. (See a review of the *Essay on the Human Soul* in the *Monthly Review*, of London, vol. XLVI., p. 254, March, 1772. See also *Marat's medical pamphlets on Gleets and on a Singular Disease of the Eyes*, reprinted by James B. Bailey, London, 1891.) Finally, there is one slight piece of evidence which points directly at Marat as the author. His hatred of academicians is well known. Now in *The Chains of Slavery* academicians are twice mentioned, and both times in a derogatory manner (pp. 125, 189). I conclude that the book is certainly Marat's, although I am satisfied that one portion of it was not originally written by him.

<sup>2</sup> The French version contains a great deal more matter than the English one, and this matter is disposed in the various chapters in a very different manner. Again Marat prefaced his French version with the story of the English one. Finally he set apart one portion of the English version as a separate essay in the French version. The English edition is a royal quarto of xvi plus 259 pages, while the French version is an octavo of 364 pages. The octavo page of the French version contains more matter than the quarto page of the English version, eight pages of the French book being equivalent to nine pages of the English one. Speaking broadly, the French version contains half again as much matter as the English one. The English version consists of "An Address to the

tory of the circumstances in which the English book was written and published. I know of nothing else of Marat's which furnishes us with a better means of determining his credibility as a witness in regard to events with which he must have been perfectly familiar.

His story of the circumstances connected with the writing and the publication of the English version is briefly as follows: Parliament was nearing its end in 1774 and new elections were approaching. In order to convince the electors of Great Britain of the necessity of electing enlightened and virtuous men to the next Parliament, Marat felt that they must be aroused from their lethargy. Hence he wrote *The Chains of Slavery*. That his appeal might be more forcible, he drew almost all his examples and illustrations from the history of England. "To devour thirty mortal volumes, to make extracts from them, to adapt them to the work, to translate and to print it, all this was a matter of three months." During this time he worked regularly twenty-one hours a day, taking scarcely two hours for sleep. The book once in the printer's hands, he fell into "a species of annihilation", losing his memory and the use of all his intellectual faculties. For thirteen days he remained in this piteous condition, being finally aroused from it "only by the aid of music and repose". As soon as he had recovered, he hastened to learn the fate of his book. To his surprise, he discovered that it was not yet published. None of the publishers had announced the book in the newspapers and several refused to place it on sale, notably Becket, bookseller to the Prince of Wales. Marat rushed to the newspaper offices and offered to pay for notices announcing his book, going so far as to offer ten guineas instead of the customary price of five shillings. It was all in vain. Everyone refused to publish a notice, and no one gave any reason, excepting Woodfall, who said that "The Address to the Electors of Great Britain", prefixed to the book, might be the cause for the refusals.

Marat was convinced that printer, publishers, and journalists

Electors of Great Britain", xvi pages, the table of contents, iv pages, an introduction, 4 pages, and "The Chains of Slavery", 255 pages. The French version begins with a "notice", containing the history of the English version, 12 pages. This is followed by the "Address to the Electors of Great Britain", 6 pages; then comes the introduction, of 4 pages; then "Les Chaines de l'Esclavage", 300 pages; then a "Tableau des vices de la Constitution angloise, présenté en août 1789 aux États-Généraux, comme une série d'écueils à éviter dans le Gouvernement qu'ils vouloient donner à la France". This again is divided into a "Lettre de l'auteur au Président des États-Généraux", August 23, 1789, 5 pages; a "Discours adressé aux Anglois le 15 avril 1774, sur les vices de leur Constitution, et les moyens d'y remédier", 27 pages; and a "Discours adressé aux Anglois le 1 août 1774".

were all bribed, and Becket's haste to remove his name from the list of publishers brought Marat to the conclusion that Lord North was guilty of the bribery. The minister was alarmed lest the book should cost him his majority in the next House of Commons and spent forty thousand dollars to prevent its issue until after the elections. Marat's printer warned him that the book might make him a great deal of trouble. Hereupon Marat, remembering Wilkes, slept for six weeks with a brace of pistols under his pillow, resolved to greet in a fitting fashion the messenger who should come to search his papers. He never came. Lord North, instructed as to Marat's character, adopted ruse instead of violence. Indignant at his failure to get the book before the public, Marat sent almost the entire edition to the patriotic societies of the north of England. The minister discovered this, and now set spies on Marat. These secured influence with his host and with his servant, and got possession of all his correspondence. The total stoppage of his letters revealed the state of affairs. In order to escape the surveillance of the ministerial emissaries, Marat withdrew to Holland, and thence returned directly to the north of England. While in the north, he visited the patriotic societies to which he had sent copies of his book, remaining three weeks at Carlisle, Berwick, and Newcastle. There all the plots of the minister were revealed to him. Three of the societies had sent him letters of affiliation in a golden box, which had been forwarded to one of his publishers. An emissary of the minister, by using Marat's name, had secured this treasure from the publisher. The society at Newcastle, unwilling that he should be at the sole expense of his work, paid the cost themselves, and also issued a new edition, "which they scattered throughout the three kingdoms".

Marat's triumph was complete but tardy, for Lord North had succeeded in suppressing his book until after the elections. Nevertheless, Marat did not fail entirely in his object, "which was the reform of the capital vices of the constitution", for there was a general "fermentation" among the public. The reason for this was that Marat had suggested reforms in his book: the abolition of rotten boroughs; the transfer to Parliament of the royal privilege to create peers; a place bill; and the verification of the treasury accounts on the call of three members of the lower house. The public desired above all a more equal representation of the people. This desideratum became the favorite toast in the popular societies. The question was debated in Parliament, but the bill was not passed.

Nevertheless, the bill to exclude from Parliament persons holding places under the government passed in full.<sup>3</sup>

What truth is there in this story?

Marat did not draw almost all his illustrations from English history. A mere count of the illustrations used proves that two-thirds of them were from the history of other countries.

Marat's assertion that the newspapers refused to print notices announcing the publication of his book, although he offered as much as ten guineas for such a notice, is untrue. *The Chains of Slavery* is announced in the *London Magazine* for April, 1774,<sup>4</sup> and in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the *Public Advertiser*, and the *Scot's Magazine* for May, 1774.<sup>5</sup>

Marat's story of the suppression of the book is also false. Becket may have withdrawn as one of the publishers,<sup>6</sup> but the book was also on sale by Almon, by Payne, and by Richardson and Urquhart. None of these withdrew, or Marat would have told us so. The book must have been placed on sale, therefore. If so, how could Lord North suppress it? He might have done so by buying up the edition, but this he did not do. Or he might have attempted to stop the sale by judicial process, but there is no mention of any such attempt. I can think of no other method by which he could have succeeded in suppressing the book. Certainly Lord North's emissaries could not have gone to Almon's shop and prevented individuals from buying the work. Moreover, Marat says that he sent "almost the entire edition" as presents to the patriotic societies of the north of England. Now, if he did anything of the sort, he gave the book a large circulation, and there could be no suppression of it when once in the hands of those societies. But Marat's memory must be faulty when he says that he did this because of

<sup>3</sup> "Passa en plein". "Lettre de l'auteur au Président des États-Généraux", April 23, 1789, in *Les Chaines de l'Esclavage*, pp. 327-328. Part of Marat's narrative is taken from this letter.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. XLIII., p. 200. Announced as on sale by Almon.

<sup>5</sup> The *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. XLIV., p. 229. Announced as on sale by Becket. Merivale, *Historical Studies*, "A Few Words on Junius and on Marat", p. 202, cites the notices in the *Advertiser* and the *Scot's Magazine*.

<sup>6</sup> Becket's name does not figure on the title-page of the British Museum copy, or on that of the Cornell University copy, though Becket is mentioned as publisher in several of the notices. It is possible, therefore, though not certain, that he did not remain on the list of publishers. Marat virtually says that the book was published: "The haste which Mr. Becket, bookseller to the Prince of Wales, showed, when the book appeared, to have his name struck from the list of publishers, put me on the right track." Merivale, noting this lack of consistency with the rest of the story, corrects Marat, saying "should appear, seemingly" (Merivale, *Historical Studies*, p. 200). But I have no doubt that Marat was right in putting the verb in the past tense.

his indignation at the successful suppression of his book, for he sent these copies of his book to the northern societies in the month of May,<sup>7</sup> and the book was not published earlier than May. The time between publication and the sending of the copies north was entirely too short to permit the author to know that the edition was not going to sell. Finally, there is evidence that the book appeared probably in May, for it was reviewed in at least two of the monthly magazines for June. The *Monthly Review* contained a brief and very hostile notice,<sup>8</sup> and the *London Magazine* lauded and quoted the book through two pages of small type in double columns.<sup>9</sup> The book was published, then, and in plenty of time for the elections, since the Parliament sitting early in 1774 was not dissolved until September 30, and the elections took place not earlier than November 29.

If the story of the suppression is false, it follows that the statement that Lord North spent forty thousand dollars for the suppression is also false. This is a detail, which probably Marat believed, but which only shows his incapacity to see things in their proper light when he was himself concerned. Supposing even that it had been possible for Lord North, by such an expenditure, to compass the suppression of the book, who can believe that he would have spent forty thousand dollars of the king's money on such an object? Forty thousand dollars would have been spent much more effectively for his purpose in the purchase of votes. The statement that he feared the influence of the book in determining the elections is absurd, for there is nothing in *The Chains of Slavery* which would justify such a fear. There are no personal attacks. The arguments are for the most part general in character and deal with abstract considerations, fulminating against tyranny, luxury, political corruption, and standing armies. No such diatribes could terrify an English politician of the eighteenth century. Not even the "Address to the Electors", which Woodfall is reported to have said might explain the suppression, contains anything which would excuse panic in the breast of Lord North.

The story about the spies is almost certainly false, unless the rest is true. If the book was on sale, what could they be employed to do? Marat may have seemed to Lord North a dangerous foreigner who needed watching, but it hardly seems possible. Lord North may have interfered with Marat's correspondence, but it is difficult to believe that he would retain possession of it. As Marat says, the

<sup>7</sup> Arrived in Newcastle, May 27. See note 10, below.

<sup>8</sup> Vol. L., p. 491.

<sup>9</sup> Vol. XLIII., pp. 286-288.

failure to receive any letters naturally led him to suspect that his mail was seized, and put him on his guard. But then the minister would know that this would be the result, and if he hoped to discover anything of importance from Marat's correspondence, he would never have retained letters which had nothing to tell, and probably would have taken copies of those which were important, returning the originals to Marat.

What was Marat's motive in telling this story of ministerial persecution? It is plain enough that such a story told to Frenchmen in 1793 would enhance the reputation of Marat in France. He gave another proof that, as he says, he had always been "the apostle, and sometimes the martyr, of liberty". Moreover, the account would seem both probable and reasonable to Frenchmen, because a book of the character of *The Chains of Slavery*, if published in France in 1774, would have caused a sensation and would have drawn upon the author the hostile attention of the government. Attempts would have been made to suppress it, and the author might well have been imprisoned for his pains.

The account of Marat's relations to the northern societies is part false, part true. Marat did send copies of his book to the northern societies.<sup>10</sup> He was unable to sell his book, because of Lord North's hostility, he tells us, and so he sent "almost the entire edition" to the societies of the north of England. It has been already shown that this could not be strictly true, because the presentation copies arrived in Newcastle in May. I now wish to point out that to the three societies in Newcastle, he sent exactly six copies.<sup>11</sup> There is no reason for supposing that he sent more than two copies each to the other societies, which could hardly be more important than the Newcastle ones. Consequently, either he did not send "almost the entire edition" or else the edition was an extremely limited one.

Marat's assertion that the northern societies sent him letters of affiliation in a golden box is not credible. Their copies of *The Chains of Slavery* came to them "from an unknown person in London",<sup>12</sup> and it would be very strange indeed if they were to

<sup>10</sup> "Yesterday [May 27] the Company of Bricklayers, the Company of Goldsmiths, and the Lumber Troop in this town, received each, by the fly, two large quarto volumes, from an unknown person in London, entitled *The Chains of Slavery*, with a prefatory address to the electors of Great Britain, to draw their timely attention to the choice of proper representatives in the next Parliament. The work is spirited, and appears through the whole a masterly execution." *Newcastle Chronicle*, May 28, 1774, quoted in the *Monthly Chronicle of North Country Lore and Legend* for April, 1887, p. 50.

<sup>11</sup> See note 10, above.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

forward letters of affiliation without knowing whom they were affiliating. Even admitting, however, that they might send letters of affiliation in blank to an unknown person, still they would certainly hesitate before enclosing them in a golden box. Note, too, that they send these letters, without knowing the address of Marat, to his publisher. Lord North's emissaries then secure the trophy from the publisher. How did they know that such an object had been sent to Marat? Was the box directed to the author of *The Chains of Slavery*? In that case it would have been stopped as it came through the mails, if Marat's assertions about the interference with his correspondence are true. The story of the golden box is a romance.

Marat was certainly in the north of England in 1775, and it is altogether probable that he spent some time at Newcastle. During that visit he might have made the acquaintance of the members of the Newcastle popular societies, but is it possible to believe that these societies discharged the costs of Marat's first edition and then paid the expenses of a second? What is true in this story is that there was a reissue of *The Chains of Slavery* at Newcastle in October, 1775.<sup>18</sup> Marat declares that this was a second edition, which "was scattered through the three kingdoms". It is impossible to disprove either assertion, but there are good reasons for doubting that the Newcastle "edition" was anything more than a reissue of the unsaleable copies of the London book. In the first place, we have Almon advertised as one of the publishers, and he would certainly never have taken up with a second edition if the history of the first had been what Marat declares it was; nor even if the first edition had been unsaleable, which is the only other alternative. Again, in the second edition of what was after all only a political pamphlet Marat would not have repeated the mistake of printing the book in a style far too expensive for such a work, yet here we have the price advertised as 10s. 6d., which is only 1s. 6d. cheaper

<sup>18</sup> "Next week will be published, price 10s. 6d., and sold by the booksellers in Newcastle, *The Chains of Slavery*, written by Dr. Marriot, a work well worthy the attention of the public." *Newcastle Chronicle*, October 21, 1775. "This day is published, price 10s. 6d., and sold by J. Almon, in Piccadilly; T. Slack, W. Charnley and F. Humble, in Newcastle; J. Graham, in Sunderland; J. Pickering, in Stockton; N. Thorn, in Durham; E. Lee, in Hexham; and A. Graham, in Alnwick, *The Chains of Slavery, A work in which the clandestine and villainous attempts of Princes to ruin Liberty are pointed out, and the dreadful scenes of Despotism disclosed, to which is prefixed an Address to the Electors of Great Britain, in order to draw timely attention to the choice of proper Representatives.* By J. T. Marat, M.D. *Vitam impendere vero.*" *Newcastle Chronicle*, October 28 and November 4, 1775. Quoted in *Monthly Chronicle of North Country Lore and Legend* for April, 1887, p. 51.

than the London publication. Then, too, the "Address to the Electors of Great Britain" was no longer timely, since the elections had taken place almost a year before. It does not seem likely that Marat would have reprinted this in 1775. But the most weighty reason for skepticism lies in the fact that no copy of this edition is known, whereas if it were spread broadcast throughout the three kingdoms, it should be fairly common. The much rarer London edition is known to exist in at least four copies.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, Marat himself, whenever he speaks of his book, always refers to his London edition.<sup>15</sup> It would seem, then, that Marat sent his unsaleable London copies north to Newcastle, and there, after printing a new title-page, attempted to sell off the rest of the edition. The date of publication itself is evidence of this. In a year's time he had got all the evidence needed of the unsaleability of his book in London. If he had not waited to be convinced of this, he would have issued his "second" edition earlier, when it would have been apropos.

Why was Marat's book unsaleable? The reason is evident in the book itself. It is a royal quarto, the type large and beautiful; the paper, linen of an excellent quality; the price 12*s.* sewed. These facts known, it must be evident at once that the book was unsaleable, for after all it was nothing but a political pamphlet, and very few people would pay twelve shillings for an anonymous pamphlet dealing with matters necessarily of only momentary interest.

I pass now to Marat's assertions about the effects of the publication when it appeared in 1775. It set the public in a fermentation, he declares, and resulted in a place bill. It is impossible to prove that it did not set the public in a fermentation, though anyone reading it now will feel very dubious about its having had this effect, especially when it is remembered that the American war was absorbing almost all political attention in October, 1775. But however true the statement about the fermentation, it is certain that no place bill passed in 1775, or at any date immediately thereafter. This statement of Marat's is false, and consequently his assertion about the influence of his book in bringing about such a place bill is also false.

<sup>14</sup> It is a very rare book. Chevremont says "Introuvable dans le commerce". *Marat Index du Bibliophile et de l'Amateur de Peintures-gravures, etc.*, p. 13. Merivale, who wrote about it, had never seen a copy. I know of only four, one in the British Museum, two in Newcastle, and one in the President White Library at Cornell. For the two at Newcastle, see *Monthly Chronicle of North Country Lore and Legend* for April, 1887, p. 50. Neither of these is the "second" edition, nor has there ever been a second edition known there, which would be odd if Marat's story were true.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, his *Les Chaines de l'Esclavage*, pp. 325, 327.

But this, after all, is a minor consideration. The truth is that under no circumstances could Marat's book have produced a ferment in respect to Parliamentary reform or have had any influence upon the passing of a place bill, for the simple reason that Parliamentary reform is never once suggested in *The Chains of Slavery*. This is astonishing in the light of Marat's declaration to the contrary. It is all the more astonishing, because a careful reader will at once observe that in one part of the book such remedies ought to be suggested. This is at the end of a long discussion on Parliamentary abuses. In turning to the French version, the wonder grows, for here we find this long fragment of the English version set apart as a separate article, entitled "Discours aux Anglois le 15 avril 1774, sur les vices de leur Constitution, et les moyens d'y remédier", and we find at the close of this "Discours" what we should expect in the English version, a statement of remedies for the reform of the abuses.<sup>16</sup>

It is now evident why Marat said that he had suggested these remedies in the English version of *The Chains of Slavery*. They were before his eyes in the French "Discours" as he wrote his introductory note for the French version. There still remains a point, however, which needs explanation. Must he not have had a copy of the English version in his possession, and would not a

<sup>16</sup> Herman Merivale, in his *Historical Studies*, published in 1865, has an essay called "A Few Words on Junius and on Marat", in which he deals with Marat's account of *The Chains of Slavery*, which he sees no particular reason to doubt. He had only the French version before him, and yet he feels justified in saying that Marat's "Discours aux Anglois le 15 avril 1774, sur les vices de leur Constitution, et les moyens d'y remédier", is in all probability not by Marat, but merely a translation from an English original. "It is all but impossible to read it", he declares, "and not suppose that it was originally written in English by an Englishman" (p. 199, and see also p. 203). A reading of the English version of the "Discours", buried as it is in the text of *The Chains of Slavery*, corroborates Merivale's suspicion. In the first place, it is a criticism of Parliament rather than of princes, and *The Chains* was written to expose the tyranny of princes, not parliaments. There is therefore no apparent justification for its incorporation in the book, and so Marat sets it apart in the French version. Again, it is a lucid criticism of the concrete faults of the English constitution in so far as Parliament is concerned, whereas the rest of the book is given over to abstract reflections upon the tyranny of princes. Then too this long fragment of thirty pages fits in ill with the plan of the book, which is in all other parts divided into short chapters, after the fashion of Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois*. Then the style is very different. The English, a little pompous and Johnsonian, is excellent, forcible, and lucid. Gallicisms are absent. The author's knowledge of his subject is fairly complete. Again the fragment has no apparent connection with the paragraphs which immediately precede and immediately follow it. Merivale is certainly right. It is the work of an Englishman. I believe the same is true of the "Address to the Electors of Great Britain", though this is by no means certain.

glance at this have shown him that he failed to make the suggestions for legislation in its pages? It is natural to suppose that this would be the case, but it was not. Marat had sold his copy of the English book to a Paris bookseller, and that without learning the name of the buyer.<sup>17</sup> In preparing the French edition, which he apparently did from the French text in which he had first written the book, he wished to consult this vanished copy of the English version. Why? In all probability because he had a lingering doubt in respect to his assertion that he had suggested legislation for Parliamentary reform in the English version. He probably never recovered the English copy, and so made the mistake of affirming what was absolutely false.

Marat may be excused for an error made when he had to guess at what he had printed nineteen years before, but his inability to state facts accurately, even when he had them before his eyes, is altogether inexcusable. A comparison of the "Lettre de l'auteur au Président des États-Généraux", of August 23, 1789, with the "Discours addressé aux Anglois", will show clearly that he was not capable of copying his own assertions accurately. In both these documents, he summarizes the four pieces of remedial legislation which he falsely declares he suggested to the English in 1774.<sup>18</sup> They are: (1) the abolition of rotten boroughs; (2) the transfer to Parliament of the royal power to create peers; (3) a place bill; (4) the verification of the treasury accounts upon the demand, with reasons given, of a few members of the lower house. Now the contents of these four bills, in the two cases, are not absolutely the same. The suggestion for the abolition of rotten boroughs in the "Lettre" is to the effect that this be done by incorporating these boroughs with the surrounding counties in the exercise of the franchise; whereas in the "Discours" the demand is that the rotten boroughs shall be incorporated with the neighboring cities. The second demand in the "Lettre" is that the power of the king to create peers shall be transferred to Parliament, but in the "Discours" it is added that this power shall not be exercised except to

<sup>17</sup> "Le citoyen auquel j'ai cédé l'exemplaire des *Chaines de l'Esclavage*, *The Chains of Slavery*, est prié de vouloir bien envoyer incessamment son adresse à l'auteur, No. 30 rue des Cordeliers, qui lui demande la permission de consulter cet ouvrage pour quelques observations essentielles." *Journal de la République Française*, no. 111, February 1, 1793, p. 8. In no. 115 of the *Journal*, p. 8, he adds to the above notice, the following: "Comme c'est un libraire, dont le nom m'est inconnu, auquel il a été remis, je prie tous les citoyens de cette profession qui prendront lecture de cet avertissement, de vouloir bien le communiquer à leurs confrères." This notice is repeated on page 8 of the numbers for February 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, and 20.

<sup>18</sup> *Les Chaines de l'Esclavage*, pp. 327, 356.

elevate plebeians who have rendered signal services to the country. The third suggestion in the "Lettre" is that a bill shall be passed excluding from Parliament all persons holding any place at the disposition of the crown. In the "Discours", however, Marat includes pensioners as well as placemen. The fourth suggestion in the "Lettre" is to the effect that the treasury accounts shall be verified on the demand, with reasons given, of three members of the lower house, while in the "Discours" the number of members is set at two. Finally, and most serious of all, in the "Lettre" Marat tells us that the place bill was passed in full, whereas in a note to the "Discours" he informs us that the bills for the abolition of rotten boroughs and for the exclusion of placemen were proposed in Parliament, but did not pass.

Marat is guilty then of telling us a story about the publication of his book in England which is false in almost every particular where we can control his assertions, and finally he shows himself unable to tell the exact truth in a matter where there was no motive for falsehood and no difficulty in stating the facts as they were. Consequently, it is impossible to credit his statements in cases where there is no corroborative evidence for them. And as a corollary to this conclusion, all present lives of Marat are well-nigh valueless. The biography of Marat remains to be written.

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